

**Approved - Wheaton Redevelopment Advisory Committee**  
**October 20, 2010**  
**Mid-County Regional Services – 2424 Reddie Drive Wheaton, MD 20902**

**Members Present,** Ciliny Alce, Gregory Baker; Maureen Carrington, Eleanor Duckett; Regina Dull, Jonathan Fink, Chelsea Johnson, Larysa Kurylas, Sara Lappano, Zoe Lefkowitz, Chris Lindsay, Diane Lynne, Leslie McDermott, Thomas Martin, Patrick Naehu, Susan Petersen, and Fran Ware

**Members Absent:** Melissa Brown, Manuel Hidalgo, James Mensah, Erin Roberts, Bob Schilke, Stewart Tsao, and Dave Taghipour

**County Staff Present:** Rob Klein, Pete McGinnity, Sharon Lasswell and Natalie Cantor

**Guest Speakers:** Vince Burke from BF Saul and Sandra Tallant, M-NCPPC

**Guests:** Taylor Brown, Wheaton Patch; Dan Alfandre, resident and Dawn Bohacz, resident.

**Meeting Called to Order** by the Chair, Mr. Baker, at 7:08 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes**

**MOTION to approve the September minutes was made by Mr. Fink and seconded by Ms. Petersen with the following two changes:**

- **Page 3 – 5<sup>th</sup> paragraph, third line – delete the word “individuals” and replace it with “or groups”.**
- **Page 4- line 12 – put a period after the word “into” and delete the last five words on that line “when site plans come up”. All were in favor - minutes were approved as amended.**

**Wheaton Urban District Update** by Natalie Cantor

Ms. Cantor manages both the Mid-County Regional Services Center and the Wheaton Urban District. She provided the committee with a brief overview. WRAC members were encouraged to have a representative attend the monthly Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee (WUDAC) \*\* meetings. The County announced at the October 14<sup>th</sup> community meeting they are looking at the possibility of combining the existing Wheaton Library and the Wheaton Recreation Center sites and building one new facility that would combine both the Wheaton Library and a 34,000 square foot Recreation Center. In the next four months, the County will hold a large town meeting to talk about what this project will be. The Rafferty Center will now revert to the developer. The Developer has the ability to build four additional townhomes, but will have to use it primarily for open space.

Ms. Cantor talked about the proposed fence for the median on Georgia Avenue between Reddie Drive and Ennalls Avenue. About 40,000 vehicles pass by at Georgia Avenue and Reddie Drive every day. SHA and DOT came to Ms. Cantor about the accidents involving pedestrians, some fatale, at Georgia Avenue and Reddie. Mid-block crossings have been a problem for some time and became a bigger concern for the County Council once the Pedestrian Walkway was completed last October. The County asked the State to consider a traffic signal at Price Avenue and Georgia Avenue; however, the request was turned down as unwarranted. Various deterrents were tried but failed. DOT worked with the Wheaton Urban District Committee and the fence was thought to be a good idea at the time. DOT has said they have other possibilities, short of a fence, they think could work. As a result of the Safeway project, there will be some changes made to Reddie Drive east of Georgia. DOT wants to see if the fence is still compatible with those changes. DOT has funds available now, but a start time is unknown at this time. Ms. Cantor was advised it would be done in this fiscal year. The installation of a fence is an engineering and pedestrian safety decision. Ms. Cantor suggested a few members from both WUDAC and WRAC meet with DOT, discuss the other

possibilities, and bring that information back to their respective committees. The fence was discussed multiple times at WUDAC meetings and there is agreement.

There was considerable discussion as to how the two committees (WUDAC and WRAC) could best work together and keep each other apprised of what is happening in their committees. Mr. Baker suggested discussing this further at the Executive Committee meeting and bringing back a proposal for the committee to vote on.

**Update on B. F. Saul Project** by Vince Burke

- B.F. Saul and the County are still working on the draft Letter of Intent (LOI) and are very close to having a final version.
- Their main task now is to work on public outreach. They have met with WUDAC, MCCAB, LEDC, Wheaton Citizens Coalition, Office of Community Partners, and Wheaton-Kensington Chamber of Commerce.
- There will be a community workshop on November 17 to introduce the team (draft press release is attached). There will be several small breakout groups that will focus on tenant retention, use of the public square, general land use and other hot button issues WRAC might have. Some hot button issues might be moving the bus bays and any sustainability goals B. F. Saul might have. The Planning & Visioning Subcommittee will provide the team with some ideas after their meeting on November 1. B. F. Saul hopes to get good feedback from the breakout sessions.
- Architects and engineers will be available at the November 17 meeting to address various concerns of the community.
- Mr. Klein indicated once the Letter of Intent is signed, the engineers for WMATA, the County and B. F. Saul could begin to discuss the technical issues.
- Mr. Baker asked if a transparent process of what the team is doing and what they are hearing from the community would be provided at the November 17 meeting. Mr. Burke indicated they are in the introductory stages now and as we move forward, the updates will be more substantive. The schedule is very aggressive. The web site they are developing may be a good way to keep everyone informed. The site could be available around the beginning of November. He will talk with their local public affairs firm, Chesapeake Public Strategies, to work out the best way to keep the WRAC aware of what is happening.
- Mr. Burke will send a PDF of the draft press release to WRAC so they can distribute it to others.

**Sector Plan Update** by Sandra Tallant

The second work session with the Planning Board will be October 28 where they will discuss a proposed amendment to the CR Zone, the Sector Plan and then the Safeway project.

The following are items discussed at the October 7 Planning Board meeting:

- The Board was concerned whether there was enough zoning capacity for office space in downtown Wheaton. Staff explained there was more than enough. Staff was asked to provide a better explanation in the plan.
- The Board had concerns about transportation modeling. Staff advised they set a 30% goal of people riding metro. The Board determined that was the correct amount, but asked staff to explain it better in the Draft Plan.
- The Board expressed concern about overcrowding of the Metro Red Line. Staff provided material to the Board demonstrating there is plenty of capacity for the future.
- The Board questioned the capacity in the school system. Staff advised there is plenty of capacity; however, the staff had the wrong numbers in the plan, which they will correct. On November 17, the Board will be looking at Crossway Community Center as a long-term potential site.
- The Board expressed concern about the CR Zone vs. the CBD Zone and whether that was a disincentive to redevelopment. The staff advised they would discuss that more at the October 28 work session.

- The Board asked staff to modify the language as it relates to the concept of sustainability.
- There was testimony regarding more east-west bike connections in Wheaton. The Board agreed with staff and more bike connections will be added to the plan. The Board asked staff to better describe the revitalization programs that are already in existence.
- On October 28, a Text Amendment will be considered by the Board to allow the individual Master Plans to specify where they would like some special conditions as it relates to transition and some other economic development incentives.
- Also on October 28, the Board will be looking at neighborhood districts; building height issues; the Overlay Zone; the CR Zone vs. the CBD Zone; CR Zone transition between commercial and residential areas; realignment of Ennalls Avenue and Price Avenue and connecting to the mall on one end and Amherst on the other end.
- Ms. Tallant was asked if the staff would change their zoning recommendation for the BB&T property. Ms. Tallant commented they are aware that the property owner, the developer and the community have suggested they keep the zone to CT. She does not know how the Board will rule on this.
- Ms. Tallant mentioned there was testimony at the October 7 Planning Board meeting regarding rezoning the single-family detached homes one mile from metro to higher density to allow accessory apartments. Those issues are much larger than the Sector Plan area. The Board agreed with staff, that it should be dealt with during zoning re-write. The residential zones for that zoning re-write will be coming forward very soon. Staff was asked by the Board to state that the Plan does support accessory apartments. Some WRAC members had a problem with the Plan supporting accessory apartments and would like to see that language removed. Ms. Tallant indicated she could not do that as she was directed by the Board to put the language in the Plan. On the Wheaton web site on the Sector Plan, staff scanned in all the testimony they received from the public.
- If accessory apartments are allowed under the new zoning, whether through a special exception or a matter of right, staff would look at the master plan recommendation and as long as the applicant is in conformance with the sector plan, staff would write a letter to the Board to advise if the proposal was or was not in conformance with the master plan. The Board would then make a decision.
- Following all the work sessions, staff will revise the report at the direction of the Planning Board. The Plan should be presented to the County Council in early 2011. As part of that process, sixty-days are allotted to the County Executive branch for review of the Plan and to conduct Economic Analysis. Subsequently, the Plan is forwarded to the County Council, which will hold additional public hearings and review through its PHED Committee. PHED will make recommendations regarding the Plan to the full County Council and ultimately the Council will vote on it. If WRAC members do not like something in the plan today, they still have opportunities to express their concerns later.

#### **Election of WRAC Officers by Rob Klein**

#### **MOTION by Mr. Lindsay and seconded by Mr. Naehu to --**

- **Approve the slate: Mr. Baker for Chair and Mr. Fink for Vice-Chair. A vote was taken and all were in favor. Motion passed.**

#### **Group Photo – A group photo was taken of WRAC members and staff.**

#### **Redevelopment Report - Mr. Klein discussed the following:**

- DGS is working with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to put together a Capital Improvement Program Budget (CIP) so we will be ready to move forward with the public elements once B. F. Saul finishes their process.
- If the Safeway/Patriot project is approved, they will have to contribute about a million dollars to fund off-site public amenities. These funds will be potentially available for use in the downtown. We

- Westfield announced they signed Panera Bread as a new tenant. Things Remembered and T-Mobile will be leasing space and Toys'R Us will lease space for the Holiday Season.

## **Subcommittee Reports**

### Planning & Visioning – Mr. Martin

- On October 4, the group discussed the BB&T Bank project and the need to support the bank and community concern that Park and Planning staff should advise the Planning Board not to rezone the properties. Ms. Tallant advised there is a Zoning Text Amendment that specifically deals with this problem. As a result, Mr. Martin said the committee would not deal with this issue at this time. Mr. Klein thought it was important to mention that Mr. Martin lives in this subdivision but is not adjacent to this project.
- Mr. Martin attended the October 7 Sector Plan work session and will be attending the one on October 28.
- The subcommittee will invite B. F. Saul to their next meeting. The subcommittee will provide them with topics to be discussed at the Community Workshop on November 17. Mr. Martin encouraged WRAC members to attend their next subcommittee meeting on November 1.
- Mr. Baker asked the subcommittee to look into the issue of Accessory Apartments in the context of the Plan, not the zoning code, and to report back in November with the pros and cons and the process and next steps.

### Project Review – Ms. Petersen

- Safeway gave a good presentation to the subcommittee on September 30. There were no objections to the project. The Safeway would like public support at the Planning Board work session on October 28. Mr. Baker will attend the Planning Board work session on the 28th.
- They briefly discussed the Safeway Public Amenities Fund and are waiting to see what develops with the B. F. Saul project.
- At the October meeting they will be discussing – How are we evaluating projects – and trying to get some sort of framework for review, something more documented or structured so that they are looking at each project through the same lens in order to continue to track items they see that might be of concern. WRAC members were invited to attend the next subcommittee meeting on October 28.
- Mr. Baker asked the subcommittee to investigate the issue of the potential median fence on Georgia and come back to the full WRAC Committee with information or an opinion. Ms. Petersen will talk with staff off line.
- Mr. Baker feels the Library/Recreation Center is something the committee should weigh in on and asked the subcommittee to take that on. Ms. Petersen indicated it would most likely not be this month, but she will talk with Ms. Cantor to let her know the committee will most likely have views on this.
- Mr. Baker asked the subcommittee to have a draft of the Guiding Principals that the committee could look at at the next WRAC meeting.
- Mr. Klein stated as a Smart Growth site, Wheaton received money for the Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel, a market study by Bay Area Economics and a study on how to deal with the bus bays at the site. The state is also interested in talking with us regarding other possible assistance they may provide.

### Economic Development – Mr. Fink

- Their last meeting primarily focused on outreach with civic and homeowners associations. There is a need to know what the key civic associations are, where they are and who the contact people are. The subcommittee has been mapping the associations and their contacts within a mile of the Metro. They group is starting with the civic associations, because some homeowners associations also

- At their next meeting, they will be looking at commitments that Westfield might make in terms of support for small businesses outside of the mall.

GreenWheaton – by Mr. Klein

- The group meets the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month. They are setting up some “Green Drink” social events to have networking among people with environmental interests. He asked members to contact him if they are interested in participating in the GreenWheaton group.
- Mr. Baker mentioned there is a group called Maryland Sustainable Certified where basically urban areas brand themselves with this certification, but they have to meet certain criteria. This may be something for GreenWheaton to look into. Maybe Wheaton could be the first in Maryland.

Taylor Brown with Wheaton Patch, an online newspaper, reminded the committee she attends most all the meetings regarding Wheaton and posts a small write up the next day. She encouraged them to check out her web site [Wheaton-md.patch.com](http://Wheaton-md.patch.com). Her email is [taylor@patch.com](mailto:taylor@patch.com).

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

**Please note: your name will become public information, recorded in the minutes of this WRAC Committee meeting, which may be photocopied and disseminated to various groups, and may appear on the internet and become retrievable by internet search engines.”**

**Addendum**



## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: October 25, 2010

Media Contacts: Steve Simon, 240-461-0333 or Dana Davidson, 240-271-0544

### **Wheaton Redevelopment Project Team to Host Community Workshop**

*Residents, Business Leaders Invited to Share Feedback at Nov. 17 Workshop, As Development Team Led by B.F. Saul Begins Shaping Vision for Redeveloping Sites Near Wheaton Metro*

Downtown Wheaton is about to undergo an exciting transformation and members of the local community are invited to help shape its future.

The downtown core area has been targeted for redevelopment by Montgomery County and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). Through a solicitation process, the County and WMATA have selected a development team led by the B.F. Saul Company, which includes the architectural firm of Torti Gallas and Partners, Inc. and the civil engineering firm of Loiederman Soltesz Associates, Inc. The team is starting to shape a vision for the mixed-used, transit-oriented development projects it will design and build on parcels of land on and adjacent to the Wheaton Metro Station. Chesapeake Public Strategies, a local public affairs firm, will oversee the public engagement process.

Local residents and business leaders who want to learn about the team's process for creating a project concept plan and who want to share their input are urged to attend an upcoming community workshop on Wednesday, Nov. 17, from 7 to 9 p.m. at Crossway Community, Inc, at 3015 Upton Drive, Kensington, MD 20895.

Workshop participants will be able to share their ideas for redevelopment of downtown Wheaton in small-group, breakout sessions on topics such as small business retention, uses of public space, and sustainable development.

To learn more about the County's Wheaton redevelopment activities, please visit the Montgomery County website at [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/wheatonredev](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/wheatonredev).

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